

# Parole board snubs recanted testimony World outraged by Troy Davis case

By Monica Moorehead

Sept. 20 — The Georgia State Board of Parole and Pardon denied clemency to death-row inmate Troy Davis this morning. With this latest decision and all other legal channels seemingly exhausted, Davis faces imminent execution on Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson, Ga.

The other three times that Davis, a 42-year-old African American, has faced lethal injection, he was granted stays of execution. There is a last-minute campaign to put pressure on District Attorney Larry Chisholm, who called for the death penalty for Davis in the original trial, to withdraw the death warrant.

Millions of people in the U.S. and worldwide have been outraged by this horrendous decision. This outrage has been expressed by hundreds of protests, most notably on Sept. 16, an official global day of solidarity with Troy Davis. (See pages 6-7.)

Then, once the board called for Davis' execution, people responded by calling emergency demonstrations in New York, Baltimore, Atlanta and elsewhere in the United States and worldwide on Sept. 20 and 21.

Hundreds of thousands of people signed petitions organized by Amnesty International, the NAACP and the International Action Center that generated millions of letters to the board, Congressional representatives, the White House, and Georgia governor demanding no ex-

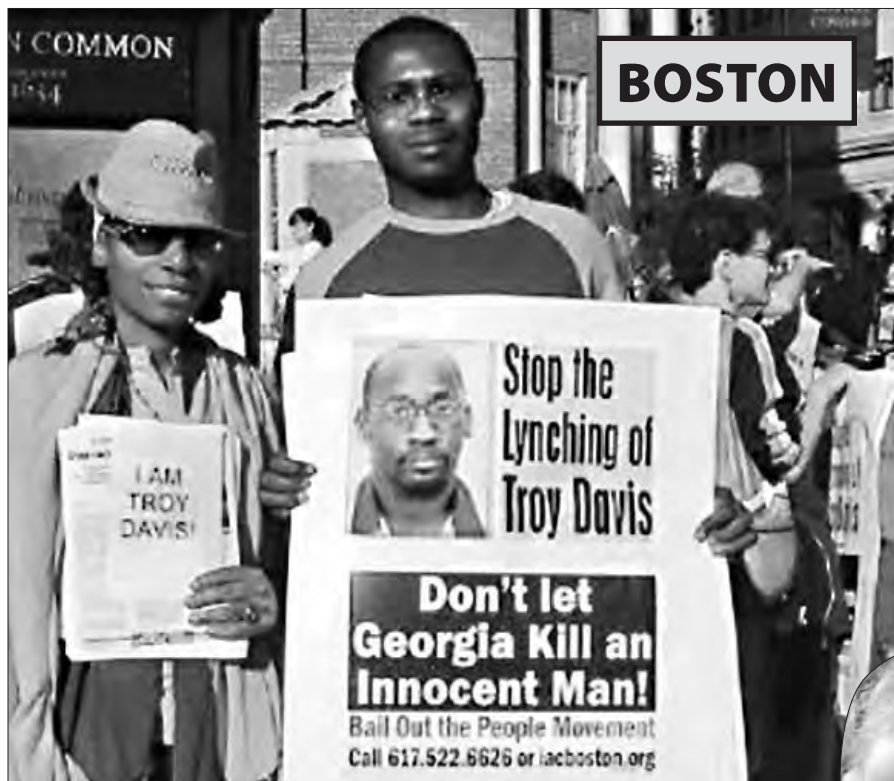
*Continued on page 6*

**POVERTY & REBELLION** 10

**WORKERS WORLD PARTY  
CONFERENCE** 3

**ECONOMY'S DOUBLE  
WHAMMY** 5

## BOSTON



## ANTI-DEATH PENALTY & PRISONS

- Global solidarity with Davis 6-7
- Attica + 40 6
- Texas execution stopped 8
- Incarceration & profits EDITORIAL 10

## PROTEST HITS WALL STREET



Youth see no future in capitalism, try to clog up Wall Street. See page 3.

WW PHOTOS STEVE KIRSCHBAUM AND : G. DUNKEL

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**BLACK LIBYANS PERSECUTED** 11 **DURBAN** meeting a decade later 9



# N.C. legislature sends gay marriage ban to general vote

By a student organizer who identifies as LGBTQ  
Raleigh, N.C.

The North Carolina House of Representatives voted 75-42 on Sept. 12 to place a constitutional ban on gay marriage on the ballot for the 2012 state elections. If Amendment One is ratified, it would permanently ban all same-sex marriages in North Carolina, prevent private employers from providing health insurance benefits to same-sex couples, and render null and void in this state all same-sex marriages made in other states.

This vote comes just as the Defense of Marriage Act is close to being overturned in the courts, following popular struggles. Overturning DOMA would force states to recognize and provide full benefits to partners through the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Despite DOMA's imminent overturn, the proposed amendment would nullify all same-sex marriages. More than 100 tax breaks, health insurance benefits, hospital visitation rights and other benefits currently available to opposite-sex married couples would continue to be near-permanently denied to same-sex couples.

The process of instilling bigotry in the North Carolina Constitution has already cost taxpayers over \$150,000 for the three days in the Legislature — money that could be spent on teachers, education or other public services.

### Maneuvering to suppress voter turnout

The amendment will be on the ballot, but not in the general election. It will be voted on during the state primary elections held on May 8, 2012. This is a calculated,

deliberate move by the Republican bloc in the legislature to suppress voter turnout while boosting their own presidential candidates.

According to the North Carolina Board of Elections, a general election in a presidential year turns out about 70 percent of registered voters, while a primary election in a presidential year only turns out about 16 to 37 percent of registered voters, depending on whether one or both of the Republicans and Democrats have relevant primaries.

With President Barack Obama slated to run for reelection on the Democratic presidential ticket and the Republican presidential nomination wide open, the vast majority of projected primary turnout will be registered Republicans. Republicans have been the strongest supporters of this reactionary amendment.

### Stand up, fight back

The struggle of the lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer community and its allies will be the only way to defeat Amendment One and all other attacks on LGBTQ peoples. Those of us who are able to register to vote and go to the polls on May 8 must go the polls to defeat this bill. Those of us who cannot, regardless of the reason, must unify in the streets to demand full rights and equality for all people regardless of sexuality, gender identity or gender expression.

Through the struggles of LGBTQ youth and workers, this amendment shall be shot down, both in the polls and in the streets.

An injury to one is an injury to all! Full rights for all LGBTQ people! ☐

## WORKERS WORLD this week...

### ★ In the U.S.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| World outraged by Troy Davis case.....                      | 1  |
| N.C. legislature sends gay marriage ban to general vote.... | 2  |
| WWP national conference .....                               | 3  |
| Youths occupy Wall Street starting Sept. 17 .....           | 3  |
| Protest welfare cuts in Michigan .....                      | 3  |
| A contract only a banker could love.....                    | 4  |
| Save the postal workers .....                               | 4  |
| Students, community speak out at Obama jobs speech ...      | 4  |
| Behind Obama's 'jobs bill' & austerity budget.....          | 5  |
| Attica rebellion commemorated .....                         | 6  |
| Demonstrations in hundreds of cities demand clemency...6    |    |
| Duane Buck gets stay of execution.....                      | 8  |
| Unemployment, poverty sow seeds of rebellion. ....          | 10 |

### ★ Around the world

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Museum censors artwork of war, occupation.....            | 8  |
| Meeting against racism set for U.N. ....                  | 9  |
| U.S. uses Cuban 5 as hostage to anti-Cuba policy.....     | 9  |
| People battle deadly repression in Bahrain.....           | 9  |
| Persecution of Black Libyans draws international outcry.. | 11 |

### ★ Editorials

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Prisons, repression & profits ..... | 10 |
|-------------------------------------|----|

### ★ Noticias En Español

|  |    |
|--|----|
| El plan de Obama no ofrece nada nuevo..... | 12 |
|--|----|

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If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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## WWP national conference

# Gathering to oppose capitalism, fight for socialism

By Kathy Durkin

What is on the minds of workers? Will they have jobs? Will health care and pensions be cut? Will they lose their homes? Their ability to provide for their children?

The ills caused by the global capitalist crisis are affecting workers in the United States and worldwide. Its worsening impact on their standard of living and very lives is a daily concern. Tens of millions are unemployed and underemployed, with no help coming — despite any so-called “jobs programs” promoted by either of the two pro-corporate political parties.

Even though the capitalists are making record profits, they are doing so without hiring workers. They are enjoying a “job-less” recovery. There is no relief in sight for working people, especially African Americans, Latinos/as, immigrants and youth, who are the hardest hit.

Millions have been pushed into poverty as they have lost jobs and with them, crucial health insurance and pensions, and, frequently, their homes. A record number are forced to rely on food stamps to feed their families and are living below the poverty line.

At the same time, pro-corporate government officials are prioritizing massive funding for the Pentagon for new weapons,

wars and occupations. They are giving trillions of dollars in tax money paid by workers to aid banks and corporations — many of which don’t even pay taxes. They are dismantling and threatening to cut more from the very safety net programs that workers have contributed to since they began.

Yet working people, youth, community activists and progressive forces are increasingly fighting back. There is growing, organized opposition to attacks on public and private sector unions and workers pushed by the superrich right wing, their government representatives and the neo-fascist Tea Party forces. Struggles continue against racist assaults, anti-immigrant policies and political repression. Reactionary incursions on women’s rights are being countered, and so are assaults on lesbian, gay, bi, transgender and queer individuals, including youth.

More and more people are realizing that capitalism itself is the problem.

### Time to meet, time to act

What can left and working-class forces do to intervene in this crisis? What conclusions can we draw from the current economic and international situation? How do we put capitalism into the dust bin of history where it belongs?

We must develop strategies to fight back

to make gains for our class and to move the struggle forward. We must build a movement — independent of the big-business parties — that fights for jobs and social programs, which tens of millions in the multinational working class need right now.

Workers World Party will discuss these crucial issues at its annual national conference on Oct. 8 and 9 at the Paul Robeson Complex in the Bronx, N.Y. The theme is “The Global Capitalist Economic Crisis: What it will take to fight it.”

Plenary sessions, workshops and discussion groups will take up a Marxist analysis of the deepening crisis and the growing, militant struggles by working and oppressed people. Activists from around the country will exchange ideas for building the anti-capitalist movement and discuss the necessity of raising a pro-socialist perspective.

WWP youth activists are organizing a panel, “Rebel against Capitalism.” Clearly, youth in the U.S. and internationally, are giving a boost to the class struggle, as they militantly oppose austerity measures, the economic crisis and repression.

WWP invites like-minded forces to attend: those who want to strategize and work on developing a united front of left forces to build an anti-racist, anti-capitalist, pro-socialist movement. Basic prin-

ciples would include all-out support for the multinational working class, backing women’s and LGBTQ rights, solidarity with oppressed peoples here and worldwide, supporting self-determination and opposing all imperialist wars.

It is time for all of us to intensify the struggle against this heinous capitalist system and to raise high the banner of Socialism, to show that a world without bigotry, oppression, exploitation, poverty and war is possible.

This year’s conference is dedicated to the revolutionary internationalist hero, Che Guevara, who was martyred 44 years ago on Oct. 8. WWP is honored to hold this year’s conference in a facility named after the late, legendary Paul Robeson, a fierce fighter for working and oppressed people, who espoused a socialist perspective.

For those who say it’s time to stand up and unite to oppose this profit-hungry system and organize for a socialist future, the Workers World Party conference is for you.

For conference details, including location and schedule, see [www.Workers-World.net](http://www.Workers-World.net). There you can register and contribute to the costs of holding this two-day event. Articles and documents related to the conference are posted there and at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) Readers should check frequently for updates. □

# Youths occupy Wall Street starting Sept. 17

By G. Dunkel

New York

“Occupy Wall Street” was a demonstration rooted in tweets, Facebook messages, and email exchanges. There was no call to kick it off, no list of endorsers, and no office with a director and staff. There were lists of Web pages, some of which had links to files to make leaflets, and certainly meetings occurred where issues and tactics were considered.

The models the organizers explicitly listed were the youth occupations in Spain, particularly Madrid, and Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt.

Nearly 1,000 people showed up on Sept. 17 starting at noon in lower Manhattan in the Bowling Green Park, which is just off Wall Street. On the weekends, this area is a popular tourist destination. Most of the demonstrators were young — some

observers suggested that 85 percent were less than 25 and 95 percent were less than 35 years old. Many had bedrolls and were planning on staying in the streets to make their protest clear.

While the protesters were overwhelmingly young people, their slogans make it clear that at least some had been at other recent protests. “Whose streets? Our streets!” “This is what democracy looks like!” and “The people united will never be defeated!” were popular slogans and broke out as the march progressed.

The protest was politically inclusive and welcomed diversity. But when a right-wing group, followers of Lyndon LaRouche, tried to sing some patriotic songs, Aron Kaye, a longtime activist in New York, went up to them and told them, “This isn’t your demonstration — get lost!” They must have believed Kaye

was speaking for a majority of protesters, as they did lose themselves.

One of the more popular chants at the start of the march was, “All day, all week, occupy Wall Street!”

There weren’t a lot of signs carried in the protest. Most of them were on cardboard boxes, handwritten with slogans like, “Occupy Wall Street”; “Citizens against greedy bankers”; “Against personhood for corporations,” which refers to a Supreme Court decision giving corporations free speech since they are legally “persons”; and “Wall St Greed! New Yorkers Say Enough.”

Code Pink had a banner reading, “Make jobs, not war.” Workers World Party’s banner read, “A Job is a right — Capitalism doesn’t work.” WWP also had signed placards that raised the Troy Davis case and declaring that racism is a tool to divide the working class. Demonstrators

picked up and carried these signs.

After a yoga class and a seminar on economics, there was an interesting speakout in front of the American Indian Museum. Larry Holmes of WWP spoke on the need to stop the execution of Troy Davis. Another speaker, drawing some cheers, called for the nationalization of the banks and the dismantling of the structure of the imperialist economy. A third speaker, carrying a Troy Davis placard, pointed out that Wall Street profits approximately equal the national debt.

After the speakout, the protesters marched a few blocks to a general assembly in Zuccoti Park, just south of the World Trade Center. While the cops had Wall Street blocked off, according to press reports about 100 people slept out on Church Street and the demonstration continued at least until Sept. 19. □



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

## ‘Stop the war on the poor’

# Protest welfare cuts in Michigan

By Kris Hamel

Detroit

Protesters gathered at noon in front of the State of Michigan building on West Grand Boulevard in Detroit on Sept. 15 as part of ongoing Thursday “resurrection marches” demanding justice for low-income people.

Sponsored by the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, the actions draw support from individuals and organizations such as the Detroit Greens, MECAWI (the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice) and Workers World Party.

On Oct. 1, tens of thousands of people in Michigan will be cut off from cash assis-

tance, which is now limited to 48 months thanks to a law signed in 2007 by former Gov. Jennifer Granholm, a Democrat. Michigan’s official unemployment rate is currently 11.2 percent. Approximately 1 million jobs have been lost in the state in the last decade.

The Republican-led state Legislature and Gov. Rick Snyder hope to trim the state budget by approximately \$64 million by cutting off limited welfare benefits to poor families and children. These cuts are on top of existing cuts to unemployment benefits, attacks on public unions and pensions, cuts to public education and huge cutbacks in all social programs.

These cuts to the poorest also occur at the same time Michigan-based auto and

other corporations are making profits and the big banks continue to reap a continuous bailout from the federal government and municipalities via debt service. These same financial institutions have devastated Detroit and communities throughout Michigan with massive predatory lending and widespread foreclosures and evictions.

An estimated 14,000 poor families — who get assistance of slightly more than a meager \$5,000 per year — will be cut off in the first wave starting Oct. 1. Nonprofit agencies, food banks and other “charities” are bracing for an influx of demand on their already overstretched efforts. Private agencies are trying desperately to provide necessities of life to a growing population of the unemployed and poor,

many of them children.

A popular chant at the demonstration was, “Me today, you tomorrow!” People of various nationalities and ages, including employed and unemployed workers, students, welfare recipients and differently-abled activists joined together in solidarity to demand the right to survival and to “Stop the war on the poor!” □



# GM workers angry

# A contract only a banker could love

By Martha Grevatt

It was nearly midnight on Sept. 16 when negotiators for General Motors and the United Auto Workers reportedly reached agreement on a new four-year contract.

With only rough details made public, the deal is being hailed as “a win for all” that “is likely to be embraced by Wall Street.” (Detroit Free Press, Sept. 18) It looks like it is a win-win — for the bankers and the auto bosses, that is!

The UAW website quotes their vice president, Joe Ashton, “The wages and benefits we negotiated in this tentative agreement reflect the fact that it was UAW members who helped turn this company around.”

In fact, workers are getting a raw deal. Concessions given during the 2009 Chapter 13 bankruptcy “which workers agreed to under coercion and with the assumption that givebacks would be restored when GM

returned to profitability” are continued.

The 2009 concessions were made to the 2007 contract that — for the first time — introduced a divisive two-tier pay structure. New hires were to start at half the pay of “traditional” employees, with a top rate of about \$12 less per hour. Annual lump sum payments replaced raises, reducing potential earnings by thousands of dollars. Retiree health care costs were turned over to a “Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association,” to which GM would make a fixed contribution, relieving the company of “legacy costs.”

GM hailed the 2007 agreement, predicting that over a four-year period labor costs would be cut in half. Before the concessions, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger estimated these costs at only 8 percent of the price of a car or truck.

This was a huge transfer of wealth from labor to capital, but when the cur-

rent Great Recession caused a worldwide collapse of vehicle sales, GM and Chrysler used their weak cash position to squeeze even more givebacks from UAW members in 2009.

The U.S. Treasury then loaned billions of dollars with the stipulation that workers make additional sacrifices. The only alternative presented to workers was a liquidation of the two companies. The White House Auto Task Force, whose members were from Wall Street and capitalist think tanks, drafted the final loan terms.

The 2009 takebacks turned back the clock on gains won decades ago. The bonuses — a poor substitute for annual pay increases — were eliminated. With mass unemployment today — when demands for a shorter workweek are in order — the union actually gave up 33 hours per year in paid break time and holiday pay. The Cost of Living Allowance was “suspended.”

As in nonunion shops, time-and-a-half after an eight-hour day was ended with the premium only kicking in after a 40-hour week. Supplemental Unemployment Benefits were curtailed. The jobs bank, which paid workers on indefinite layoff for 40 hours of charitable work outside the plant, was dropped.

Limitations on second-tier hiring, which might have eventually allowed “entry level” workers to move into “traditional” positions, were cancelled. So were incremental raises; second-tier pay was frozen at around \$14.50 an hour.

A dozen plants were selected to be closed. The promise of the 2007 contract — job security — was trashed in 2009. The number of hourly employees at GM fell from 73,000 to 48,500.

The union also agreed that with the next contract — the one to be voted on — all “unresolved issues” would automatically be sent to arbitration. In other words, the UAW agreed two years ahead of time not to strike over this new contract!

So far, the only known improvements

include a modest pay increase for second-tier workers that will still — by the end of the new four-year agreement — leave a gap of \$9 to \$12 between them and higher seniority workers.

What is, “likely to be embraced” by finance capital is an enticing “signing bonus” of \$5,000 per worker. At one point JPMorgan Chase predicted it would be \$7,500. Coming from a major GM shareholder and GM’s longtime lender of choice, this “prediction” was what this Wall Street titan was willing to pay up front to make the 2009 concessions more permanent. Wall Street also welcomes the “enhanced” profit-sharing formula that might “share” \$1,000 to \$2,000 more with hourly workers — or leave them with nothing if car sales and profits take another nosedive.

The UAW statement promised that new jobs were being created. Reportedly, at least one closed plant may reopen. The halving of production wages has made it affordable for GM to move work back into the U.S. from lower-wage countries, saving transportation costs. To call that job creation, when the company is just laying off workers somewhere else in the world, is to make a mockery of “cross-border solidarity.”

Workers feel that they deserve to get back what they gave up under duress. GM made \$4.7 billion in net profits last year and \$5.7 billion in the first two quarters of this year. Second-tier workers are tired of making half the wages of someone next to them doing the exact same work.

Many workers at all pay levels are angry and plan to vote “no.” Rank-and-file activists, including Autoworkers Caravan, have campaigned since negotiations began for a rejection of any contract that retains tiered wages. Should they succeed, or even muster up a sizable opposition vote, it will be an important psychological victory and a first step towards building a fightback movement to assert working-class power on the shop floor. □

## S.F. Labor Council:

## Save the postal workers

By Sue Davis

The San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution unanimously on Sept. 12 to save the public postal service, which is the latest target of right-wing attacks on organized labor.

The council responded to the proposed plan to decimate the U.S. Postal Service by eliminating Saturday delivery, shutting 3,700 USPS offices and firing 120,000 workers, despite a no-layoff clause in union contracts. The SFLC also pointed out that influential Rep. Darrell E. Issa (R-Calif.) has even more devastating plans: voiding all contracts for 574,000 postal workers and opening the door to privatization.

The resolution also noted that such cut-

backs would have the most damaging effects on seniors, the poor and those living in rural communities, exactly those who depend on USPS services the most.

Calling this “an attack on all of labor,” the SFLC voted to close ranks with all other labor organizations in the country to defend postal workers and stop this draconian assault. In addition to protesting the closing of the local Bayview facility, the SFLC will support demonstrations on the National Day of Action called by the postal unions for Sept. 27. It also urged Bay Area congresspeople to co-sponsor two bills supported by postal unions: HR 137, which requires six days of mail delivery each week, and HR 1351, which seeks to prevent the USPS from defaulting on payments for future retiree health benefits. □

# Students, community speak out at Obama’s N.C. jobs speech

By Bryan Perlmutter  
Raleigh, N.C.

Currently on a nationwide tour to promote his new jobs bill, President Barack Obama made one of his first stops at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C., on Sept. 14. Within 24 hours of the announcement earlier that week, students and community members in Raleigh came together to organize a protest. The protest called for immediate federal action on immigration policy, to pass the Dream Act, to stop deportations and to veto the Keystone XL pipeline.

The protesters gathered and marched near the entrance of Reynolds Coliseum on NCSU’s campus as 10,000 people filed in to hear the president’s speech. Police restricted the marching of the protesters to one side of the venue, but their presence was still felt. White House staffers tried to start their own chants among the crowd in line, but couldn’t match the spirit of the demonstration that had gathered nearby.

The students chanted, “Yes, we can stop the pipeline! Yes we can pass the Dream Act!” and “Money for jobs and education, not for war and deportation!” The protesters gathered support from people standing in line by passing out literature and giving speeches.

Since 2008, there have been 1 million deportations, more than during any other ad-



Youth want jobs, not talk.

WW PHOTO: IRENE GODINEZ

ministration. The White House has claimed that young students are not the target of deportations, but an increasing number of young people have been deported.

“I’ve seen friends, family and people who deserve to go to college denied that opportunity. They’re not U.S. citizens, but they’re just as American, if not more,” said Joel Cabrera, a first-year student in human biology at NC State. “I have seen the smartest people in my community unable to obtain access to higher education because of their immigration status.”

The other demand made by the group

was around the Keystone XL Tar Sands pipeline, which is currently awaiting final approval from the White House before it is constructed. The pipeline will send 900,000 barrels a day of the world’s dirtiest oil to U.S. refineries, allowing further development of the Alberta tar sands. The pipeline would run from Alberta, Canada, through the Northern Plains states before ending at refineries in Nebraska and Illinois.

Mining oil from tar sands creates three times more carbon emissions than conventional oil extraction.

“I am asking you to think about the fu-

ture of your children and grandchildren. I refuse to allow corporations and the government to destroy the environment for future generations,” said one of the protesters who spoke at the event. “Over 1,250 people have already been arrested protesting the pipeline. We must keep the pressure on President Obama to veto the pipeline!”

Students at the rally said they would not stop at this action. They will continue to mobilize and organize on campus and in their community to tell the powers that be that we must change the path on which we are headed. □



## Double whammy spells more misery for workers

# Behind Obama's 'jobs bill' & austerity budget

By Deirdre Griswold

The vast majority of the people in the U.S. depend on wages to get by. Only 7 percent of those who work full-time are self-employed. Farmers, for example, who a century ago made up almost half the population, now account for less than 1 percent. Vastly more people work for large corporations or retail chains than have their own businesses.

Fully 93 percent of those who work every day rely on that paycheck coming in. This figure shows the tremendous growth of the proletariat — people who have nothing to live on but their ability to work and thus be exploited by a boss.

Without that pay, wage workers are in danger of losing everything: their homes, being able to feed their families, access to health care, retirement funds, higher education for themselves and their children, even their mobility — most workers need cars to get to work. All these things have to be paid for with wages.

Keep this in mind when looking at the unemployment figures put out by the Department of Labor. In August, there was zero job growth. More than 9 percent of the workforce — adding up to 14 million people — have no jobs. Another 9 million people work only part-time, even though they want and need full-time jobs. Close to half of those completely jobless have been looking for work for more than half a year — at least 27 weeks.

These figures don't even cover the millions who lost their jobs and have given up looking.

Many analysts consider these figures to be understated, but they do show that what has been called a "recovery" means nothing for the workers. The fact is that four years after the housing bubble burst and started a financial crisis, there has been no jobs recovery. Now the markets are heading down again and the prospects are even more ominous for workers.

Obviously, workers are in a terrible crisis — and not just in the United States. The same thing is true throughout the capitalist world. Unemployment is high and there is no relief in sight. In several European countries, half of all young people can't even get started in the job market.

Wherever there is oppression based on racism and national origin — which means in all the imperialist countries — the figures on unemployment and poverty in these communities are dramatically worse.

### Workers had hope in Obama, but got nothing

Workers in the U.S. have been hoping the Obama administration would come to their aid. They have seen Washington spend trillions of dollars to bail out huge banks and other financial institutions, even those responsible for such disasters as the mortgage foreclosure crisis.



No jobs means no future: youth gather for protest near Wall Street Sept. 17.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Since the financial crisis of 2008, however, nothing has been done to set up a real government jobs program. In fact, just the opposite has happened. In addition to all the millions of jobs that have disappeared as private companies downsize and/or move their operations to low-wage areas of the globe, the working class is now confronted with millions of layoffs in the public sector. Governments at all levels — federal, state, municipal, county and township — are claiming poverty and cutting budgets for all kinds of social services.

This phenomenon — trying to force austerity down the throats of workers as a supposed antidote to the crisis — is being repeated across the capitalist world. The politicians — who have learned their tricks in parties totally beholden to the capitalist class — are fearful of offending their patrons by shifting even part of the state's burden onto the shoulders of the rich.

They will stampede into their legislative seats to raise their hands for bailouts to billionaires, but they will find any excuse to avoid making the capitalists pay for the catastrophic failure of their system. This bloodletting of jobs in the public sector has only made the overall capitalist crisis of overproduction worse.

After three years of stagnation and decline, in which his popularity dropped in tandem with workers' hopes of getting any relief, President Barack Obama finally gave a speech about jobs on Sept. 8. He followed that up with another speech on Sept. 19 about reducing the budget deficit.

No jobs, but jobless benefits — with a hook

Obama's first talk was to push Congress to pass what he called the American Jobs Act. A telling feature of this bill is to continue extended unemployment benefits for up to 99 weeks. While, if passed,

this would undoubtedly be welcomed by a lot of jobless workers about to have their checks cut off, it contradicts the idea that the act will provide many jobs.

For the "99ers," people who have already maxed out of the time allowed for unemployment benefits but have not found work, this bill provides nothing.

There is also another side to the proposed extended benefits: recipients who get "training" from a company will receive only their unemployment checks for eight weeks, during which time the boss pays nothing for these full-time new employees.

The average unemployment check in 2010 came to less than \$300 a week. This is significantly below the federal poverty level for a family of three. If workers get nothing but unemployment to live on for two years, they will likely exhaust any other assets they might have.

### Tax breaks to small businesses

The premise behind the bill is that more tax breaks and other incentives to small businesses will encourage them to create new jobs. This is not a new idea. That was the rationale behind the \$825 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010.

Both became law, but they have had no effect on overall unemployment.

Obama in his talk called this bill a "\$447 billion stimulus plan." Some \$105 billion would be spent on infrastructure projects, like schools and transportation, spread out over two years. Considering how badly the infrastructure has deteriorated and how many people are looking for work, that amounts to nothing more than a band-aid.

\$50 billion a year wouldn't cover the annual wages of 1 million construction workers — without even considering the

cost of materials, the planning and administration of the projects, and other overhead, which always come to much more than actual wages paid. Meanwhile, there are between 25 million and 30 million unemployed and underemployed workers in this country.

### Cutting 'payroll taxes' is attack on Social Security

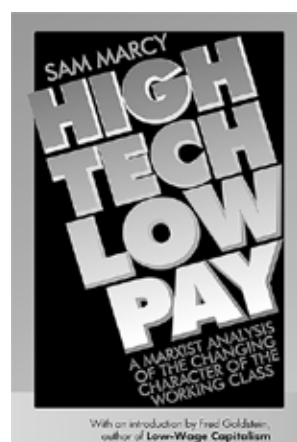
More than half of the \$447 billion price tag for this bill would come from reducing payroll taxes paid by businesses and individuals. However, the catch here is that payroll taxes, or FICA, are what both employers and workers pay into the Social Security Trust Fund.

If Obama wants to cut workers' taxes, why not cut their income taxes? The federal government funnels hundreds of billions of dollars of general revenue to the Pentagon and also to big banks that perpetually suck up huge interest payments on government loans. Both Republicans and Democrats have agreed not to cut these money guzzlers.

What Obama is calling a "payroll tax cut" is really an assault on Social Security and Medicare. This huge pool of money, meant to keep workers out of abject poverty in their older years, was set up as a completely separate fund, not to be used for anything else. It was something that workers were entitled to and finally won through militant struggle.

Now the word "entitlement" is said with a sneer by reactionary politicians who owe their positions to corporate-financed election campaigns. The ruling class wants access to this huge amount of money, to "privatize" it, to draw it into the obscene speculation and gambling that especially characterize this phase of parasitic capitalism.

*Next: Austerity budget will kill more jobs.*



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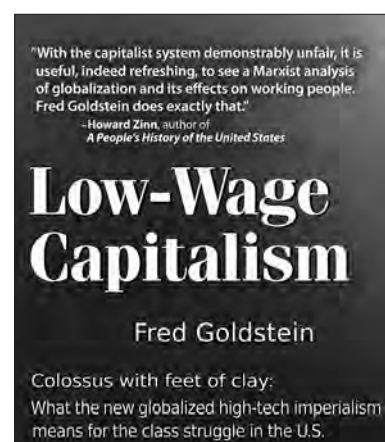
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BUFFALO

# Attica rebellion commemorated

By Ellie Dorritie  
Buffalo, N.Y.

When the historic rebellion at Attica Prison erupted forty years ago, many Buffalo, N.Y., activists were intensely involved with support and solidarity for the righteous demands of the prisoners, and with their long, long struggle for justice after Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ordered the State Police to massacre the uprising's participants.

Activists joined many demonstrations and courtroom shows of solidarity in Buffalo in the years following that massacre. During the recent 40th anniversary of the rebellion, activists who were incarcerated during that time joined with activists who carried on solidarity work in a series of events here. Others were drawn in by the deep history of the struggle centered here.

Sept. 9, was the anniversary of the date that the prisoners at Attica, after months of being denied a hearing for their grievances, rose up and took control of half the prison, saying, "We are men. We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten and driven as such." To commemorate and honor the struggle, the Prison Action Committee, WNY Peace Center, held a pilgrimage to Attica Prison, with an early morning rally in Buffalo, before a two-day walk to Attica,

ending in a rally at the prison.

The evening before, a screening of the 1974 film, "Attica," was held at Burning Books. This documentary shows how the Black, Latino and white prisoners united and became brothers, and how their demands and their unity became political, inside D Yard as well as around the world. This explains why the state was so anxious to violently and brutally crush the uprising.

On Sept. 12 and 13, panels held during a Law Center conference at the suburban campus of the University of Buffalo focused on the importance of the prisoners' reclaiming of their humanity and brotherhood. The conference focused its opening panel on the fact that the state of New York still has never apologized, now after 40 years, and that those who directed and committed the murders, the governor and the state troopers, have never been held accountable.

On the evening of Sept. 12, a community forum in the center of the Buffalo — "Mass Incarceration and Its Impact on the Community" — presented panelists from prison ministries, some former prisoners themselves. These people spoke forcefully about the bitter toll taken on the most oppressed communities as the rate of imprisonment of their people skyrockets.

Over and over it was emphasized that

prisons have become a huge, profitable industry, and that reforms promised after the Attica rebellion have been wiped out. This has subjected prisoners everywhere to the same old abuses.

Panelists and a community speakout called for an unrelenting fight for justice. The program was organized and presented by Prisoners Are People Too, and had nearly a dozen university and community co-sponsors.

On the evening of Sept. 13, surviving Attica Brother Dacajeweah — "Splitting the Sky" — spoke at a second Burning Books event. He described the violence and racism directed by the state against Native nations, and told of the many years of fightback carried on, and about the fight for justice that was the Attica rebellion, and the long fight afterwards for justice that has not yet been won.

Dacajeweah was the only person who received a conviction after that event, despite the fact that it was really a mass execution of prisoners by police. He said, "I am not here trying to make prisons a better place to live. We need to make the world a better place to live — without greed and racism — but we have to continue always to fight against the state to win — against the torturers and war criminals — so that there will still be a world for our descendants." □



# Demonstration

By LeiLani Dowell

At more than 300 rallies across the country and others around the world, activists, students and community members converged on Sept. 16 to defend Troy Davis from the imminent threat of execution imposed by the racist U.S. "justice" system. The rallies were in response to an international day of action called by several organizations.

Davis, who was sentenced to death in 1991 for the murder of an off-duty police officer, is scheduled to be executed in Georgia on Sept. 21. However, no direct evidence was brought to convict Davis during his trial, and seven of the nine witnesses who testified that Davis was the shooter have since recanted their testimony, saying they were coerced by police into giving false statements. Davis himself has consistently proclaimed his innocence.

Some 1,500-2,000 people marched out from Woodruff Park to Ebenezer Baptist Church in ATLANTA on Sept. 16. An International Action Center banner, "Innocence matters — Stop the execution of Troy Davis," was held high near the front of the march. Banners were also carried by religious groups, students and homeless advocates. The predominant sign at the rally was a picture of Davis's face, with the words, "Too much doubt to execute."

The majority Black yet very multinational crowd included lots of youth and students, as well as members of the lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer communities. Buses came from several Georgia cities, including SAVANNAH and ROME. Carloads and vans came from others.

Participating organizations included the NAACP, Amnesty International, Workers World Party, the International Socialist Organization and the New Black Panther Party. Bringing up the rear of the march, students from Georgia State drummed and led spirited chants.

Ebenezer Church, with a capacity of 2,200 people, was already partially filled when the marchers arrived for a program on Troy Davis. Inside, speakers included Davis' sister and his nephew, Larry Cox of Amnesty International, the Rev. Al Sharpton, activist Dick Gregory, some prisoners who had been on death row but were exonerated, NAACP President Ben Jealous and other state and city NAACP representatives, and Katheryn Hammoudah of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. Folk rock music duo, Indigo Girls, sang, as did church choirs. The program lasted until 10:30 p.m.

Even with participants squeezed in tight into the church, a good 500 or more people were not able to get in. An impromptu rally was held in an amphitheater adjacent to the church, at a Martin Luther King Jr. historical site. A New Black Panther Party leader with a bullhorn seized the moment. Several exonerated death row prisoners spoke as well as students from Georgia State. The revolutionary politics expressed at this rally received a good response from the mostly young crowd. At about 9 p.m., the students led folks in another march.

People will be gathering again on Sept. 19 at the offices of the Pardons and Parole Board, which will be having its hearing on Davis' execution. Activists plan to arrive early in the

## Parole board snubs recanted testimony

# World outraged by Troy Davis case

Continued from page 1  
ecution of Troy Davis.

If one is in chains,  
we all are

Outside the board's office in downtown Atlanta, the Rev. Marvin Morgan chained himself to a flagpole to protest the clemency denial. He then declared that he had started a hunger strike. Morgan said, "If the state of Georgia can intentionally kill a person in a case surrounded with this much doubt, then we're all subject to the same fate." (Los Angeles Times, Sept. 20)

Of the long, looped chains holding him, secured with a Master lock, he said they were "saying that when one person's in bondage, we're all in bondage. I am not insane. I believe this act indicates my sanity more than anything else." Morgan, 63 years old, was then arrested by a half dozen cops for trespassing on state property.

Davis was charged with first degree murder in the 1989 shooting of an off-duty police officer, Mark MacPhail, in Savannah, Ga. He was sentenced to death in 1991 based on the eyewitness testimony of several witnesses. Years later, at least seven of those witnesses recanted their testimony, saying that they were coerced by the police into implicating Davis.

One juror, Brenda Forest, publicly stated that if she had had all the facts during Davis' trial, she would never have convicted him.

Edward DuBose, Georgia State Conference president of the NAACP, who visited Davis today after the board decision, said, "It is bigger than Troy. It really reflects the attitude of a country and a state that still sees Black life as meaningless. That is the only conclusion that you could come away with from the decision made by the parole board." (www.eons.com, Sept. 20)



In reaction to the clemency ruling, Laura Moye, an Amnesty International representative in Georgia, stated at a Sept. 20 press conference: "This is an affront to human rights. This is not just a case here in Georgia where over 40,000 people have joined their voices in signing our petitions. This is an international human rights case. We are facing an international human rights scandal tomorrow." (MSNBC)

When asked by an MSNBC reporter what's next after the clemency denial, Dianne Mathiowetz, a leading organizer of the Atlanta IAC, said, "The struggle for justice never ends. Troy has said it many times himself. He wants all of his supporters not just to be concerned about the facts in his case, and the denial of justice in his case, but that we extend that activism to the many, many thousands of others who are incarcerated and also facing death. We will continue the fight. We are still trying to stop this execution here in Georgia. We are not giving up." (Sept. 20)

When asked about the people demanding justice for Davis, Mathiowetz replied, "The millions of people who are watching this case are not high-profile people. They are the people who are losing their jobs, losing their homes, facing their own situations with the criminal justice system, whether it's banks that foreclose on them

illegally, bosses who lay them off, etc.

"The issue of why this decision came down from the board when they previously had said that no prisoner would be executed in Georgia where there remained any doubt, and clearly there isn't just a shadow of a doubt, but there are mountains of doubt. In my opinion, this is a political decision, a decision not based on law."

This latest atrocity has once again shone a bright light on

the racist injustice that is interwoven into the social fabric of U.S. society, especially when a Black man is accused of killing a white police officer. Nine times out of ten, capital punishment is involved. The case of death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in Pennsylvania is a case in point.

The Georgia board's decision was all about protecting the reputations of police officers who forced witnesses to testify against Davis. In other words, if Davis' life has to be sacrificed to cover up police misconduct, then so be it. This view is the norm, not the exception.

Mathiowetz told WW: "If there was still anyone who had doubts about the innocence of Troy Davis, there is no doubt now about the guilt of the state of Georgia in going forward with a death sentence when so much doubt has been cast on the original trial verdict."

"For all the millions of people who are watching this case, the board decision makes clear this system has nothing to offer people — no justice, no jobs, no health care, no education and no fairness."

It appears that the blood of another oppressed person, Troy Davis, will be dripping from the already bloody hands of Georgia.

For updates on this story, see workers.org.





LOS ANGELES

WW PHOTOS: SCOTT SCHEFFER

# ions in hundreds of cities demand clemency

morning and remain throughout the hearing, which is closed to the public. Davis' lawyers will present all the recanted witnesses' affidavits, plus statements by three jurors who say that they no longer believe Davis is guilty.

## HOUSTON

Feelings of anger, determination and disgust filled those occupying the sidewalk in front of the criminal courthouse in Houston on Sept. 16. Chants included a call and response of "I am" and then "Troy Davis." A leader of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement said: "We are here because Houston is the jurisdiction in the U.S. that executes more people than any other. We know firsthand the racism and injustice that permeates the criminal justice system. Just as in the cases of Mumia Abu-Jamal and Shaka Sankofa, racist cops and courts are planning to lynch Troy Davis."

Kofi Taharka, national chair of the National Black United Front, told the crowd: "This racist system has declared war on Black men. We must not allow the execution of Troy Davis." Minister Robert Muhammad, who witnessed the execution of an innocent Shaka Sankofa in 2000, said: "It is better to be guilty and rich in Texas, than to be innocent and poor. Troy Davis' execution must be stopped!"

Hundreds of leaflets were handed out to those leaving the courthouse. One African-American man stopped to tell the rally that he had just been disqualified for jury duty in a capital murder trial because he told the court he was opposed to the death penalty. He wished Davis good luck.

Each protester recorded the phone number of the Georgia Board of Pardons in their cell phones. The office had closed early, and their mailbox was full and not taking messages. But the crowd vowed to call early on Sept. 19.

Others supporting the Day of Solidarity were the University of Houston SDS, the Harris County Green Party, the Nation of Islam, the Houston NAACP, Justice for Palestinians, and Pacifica KPFT radio hosts Akua Holt of Pan African Journal, Brother Zin of Sounds of Soul Radio and Minister Muhammad of Connect the Dots. A protest also took place at the Capitol in Austin, Texas, called by the Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

## NEW YORK

An emergency rally held in Times Square as part of the international day of action on Sept. 16 drew 300 to 500 activists. The International Action Center provided the sound and stage and had mobilized intensely for the rally at many events in the days leading to the demonstration.

The rally was co-sponsored by Amnesty International USA, the International Action Center, the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, NAACP N.Y., New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, Equal Justice USA, The Brecht Forum, the Answer Coalition, the National Lawyers Guild NYC Chapter and the Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory.

The rally was co-chaired by Thenjiwe McHarris of Amnesty International and former New York state death row prisoner and Black Panther member Lawrence Hayes, representing the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. Larry Holmes spoke for the International Action Center.

## LOS ANGELES

An emergency action was held at the Westwood Federal Building in Los Angeles. The joint call was made by the All African People's Revolutionary Party, Human Rights Advocates, the Humanitarian Law Project, the Puerto Rican Alliance, Unión del Barrio, the Southern California Immigration Coalition, SiGaw-Gabriela USA, Workers World Party and the International Action Center.

A demonstration was being held at the same location by Los Angeles Jews for Peace regarding the U.N. vote on Palestine, so the two rallies shared the microphone, with all participants chanting, "Free Troy Davis, Free Palestine!" Out of the Sept. 16 rally, another protest for Troy Davis was scheduled for Sept. 20 at Leimert Park in South Central Los Angeles.

Dozens of people gathered in downtown **BALTIMORE** at rush hour in front of the federal building to demand no execution of Troy Davis and an end to the racist death penalty. The protest was initiated by the



All Peoples Congress and endorsed by a number of groups, including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Action Network, Jamaat al-Muslimeen, the Johns Hopkins Chapter of Amnesty International and others.

Dozens of activists participated in an emergency demonstration and speakout in downtown **BOSTON** on Sept. 16 to stop the execution of Troy Davis. Hundreds of passersby took flyers and stopped to listen as speaker after speaker explained Davis' innocence and called for clemency and freedom. The rally was kicked off by Myia X of SistaCipher. Speakers included students from Spark, organizing at Tufts, Wheelock College and other campuses. Former Black Panther, Bob Traynham, of the International Action Center chaired.

Traynham introduced a brother who had spent several decades in Massachusetts prisons, who said he went into prison as a Black Panther and came out as a Gray Panther. Former political prisoner and longtime prison rights activist Kazi Toure addressed the gathering. Others included longtime prison rights activist Susan Mortimer; a representative from Amnesty International; Ed Childs, Chief Shop Steward, UNITE HERE Local 26; Steve Kirschbaum of Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751; Maureen Skehan of the Women's Fightback Network; Jason Lyden, minister of the Community Church of Boston; Boston City Council candidate Deshon Porter; and other activists.

Close to 20 people gathered at a busy intersection in Tucson at an emergency protest to stop the execution of Troy Davis. **CLEVELAND** had a high-spirited protest for Troy Davis at the so-called Justice Center, part of which is the county jail. Prisoners waved and gave the power fist. The protesters then marched all over downtown Cleveland, chanting and passing out flyers.

Over 100 protesters of many ages lined Woodward Avenue in downtown **DETROIT**

outside Central United Methodist Church on Sept. 16 at a highly visible after-work rally for Troy Davis co-sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice and Amnesty International. Passersby on foot, bicycle and in cars and buses honked and waved their support. Hundreds of leaflets with the recent Workers World front-page article on Davis were distributed.

**PHILADELPHIA's** progressive workers and students turned out for two demonstrations on Sept. 16, one at City Hall and another at Temple University's main campus in North Philadelphia. Protesters spoke about the Davis case as being only an especially outrageous example of the inherently racist nature of U.S. capitalist society in general. To illustrate this, protesters drew comparisons to the ongoing case of Philadelphia's own Mumia Abu-Jamal and the bloodthirsty imperialist assault on the African nation of Libya.

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Around the world, groups responded to the call to action for Troy Davis on Sept. 16. In **FRANCE**, six French organizations mobilized for gatherings in Paris and 10 other regions. (<http://www.amnesty.fr>)

Agence France-Presse reports that about 150 people gathered Friday night in Paris. The demonstrators, most dressed in T-shirts bearing Davis's portrait, gathered near the Pompidou Center. Participants distributed leaflets and invited passersby to sign a petition against the execution. (Sept. 16)

In **MONTREAL**, a demonstration in the form of a "die-in" was held on Sept. 17 in front of the U.S. Consulate (Metro Montreal, Sept. 17), while in **BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**, some 40 people protested on the steps of Brussels Palais de Justice, their faces covered with a photo of Davis. (<http://www.rtf.be>, Sept. 16)

*Steven Ceci, Sara Flounders, Kris Hamel, Michael Ladson, Dianne Mathieowitz, Frank Neisser, John Parker, Andre Powell and Gloria Rubac contributed to this report.*



NEW YORK

PHOTO: JANET MAYES



BALTIMORE

PHOTO: NADRATSIDDIQUE



## In a blow to racist sentencing

# Duane Buck gets stay of execution

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Outside the death house at Texas' Huntsville prison on Sept. 15, what began as a hot, humid afternoon filled with apprehension and fear, protests and praying, ended with shouting, cheering, hugging, kissing and singing hymns. Open racism in trial proceedings had lost the day.

Duane Buck, an African-American man from Houston, had been scheduled for execution that day. After a double murder conviction, he was sent to death row in 1997 after "expert witness" and psychologist Walter Quijano testified at his sentencing hearing that African Americans were likely to be a future danger to society just because they were Black.

Seven other men, all Black or Latino, were also sent to Texas death row largely on Quijano's testimony, but all of them, except for Buck, had received new sentencing hearings. As Buck's execution approached, his attorneys fought for a new sentencing, free from racist testimony.

One of the surviving victims of Buck's crime was his sister, Phyllis Taylor, who was shot in the chest. She had forgiven Buck and spent the days before his execution traveling to Austin to personally meet with Rissie Owens, chair of the Texas Board of Pardons, to demand a stay and a new sentencing trial. Taylor also participated in a press conference in Houston with another sister, Monique Winn, calling on the Houston district attorney to withdraw the execution date. Both denied her pleas.

As the execution date of Sept. 15 approached, the Buck family was in high gear. Buck has 22 siblings, due to several marriages and a blended family. This large family had their last visits with Buck that morning and then descended on Huntsville, all wearing white T-shirts with a big picture of a smiling Buck on the front and Bible scripture on the back.

About 25 family members joined a demonstration outside the death house, holding signs and hoping for justice. Two brothers and Buck's fiancée were inside



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Duane Buck's relatives happy execution was stayed.

the prison administration building, waiting to witness the lynching of their loved one.

But as the 6 p.m. time for execution approached, nothing was happening. No media and no witnesses were seen entering the death house. The U.S. Supreme Court was still deliberating. Protests continued and the Buck family demonstrated, prayed and sang hymns. Then 7 p.m. came and went and still no movement toward the death house.

Armed prison police and guards normally guard 12th Street, where the death house is located. The block is cordoned off with yellow crime scene tape in preparation for the judicial murder.

At 7:40 an ABC reporter walked down the hill to the family and told them to gather around. "I have some news," she said. "Duane was given a stay by the Supreme Court."

By then, Avenue I at 12th Street was filled with death penalty abolitionists and the large Buck family, everyone scream-

ing, hugging and crying out in joy: "Justice has prevailed!"

**Davis family to join Oct. 22 march**

The whole family gathered at a nearby house that had hosted them that afternoon. In the large living room the family and abolitionists held hands, prayed and sang. The annual march in Texas for abolition was discussed, and family members said they would join this year's event.

Later, attorneys for Buck issued a statement: "We are relieved that the U.S. Supreme Court recognized the obvious injustice of allowing a defendant's race to factor into sentencing decisions and granted a stay of execution," said Katherine Black, one of Buck's lawyers with the Texas Defender Service.

"No one should be put to death based on the color of his or her skin," she said. "We are confident that the court will agree that our client is entitled to a fair sentencing hearing that is untainted by considerations of his race."

In granting the stay late Thursday, the high court said it would halt the execution at least long enough for the submission and consideration of legal briefs. If the court denies Buck's petition, the stay would automatically end and Texas would again be free to proceed with a scheduled execution, the order says.

It adds that if the court agrees to hear the case, the stay would remain in effect until the court issues its final judgment.

Most execution days in Huntsville do not end with smiles, only tears and another grieving family. Just two days before, Steven Woods' family left in tears and distress. Woods was the 474th person Texas had put to death since executions resumed in 1982.

Texas has executions scheduled for Sept. 20 and 21, as well as five others.

The family of Cleve Foster, a man who is likely innocent and whose co-defendant admits that Foster had nothing to do with the crime, also left Huntsville with smiles after a Supreme Court reprieve.

On Sept. 21 Russell Brewer, one of three white men involved in the brutal and racist dragging death of James Byrd Jr., is set to die. Civil rights activist and comedian Dick Gregory will visit Byrd's grave in Jasper, Tex., and then camp in front of the Texas death house and fast for 18 hours, beginning early in the morning of Sept. 21, to oppose Brewer's execution.

Texas's death chamber remains the most active in the U.S. Death penalty abolitionists are organizing for the 12th Annual March to Abolish the Death Penalty in Austin, Tex., on Oct. 22.

Witness to Innocence, an organization made up only of people who were on death row and then exonerated, and their families, will begin a Texas Freedom Tour 10 days before the march to tell their stories and to build support in Houston, Dallas, Corpus Christi, Huntsville and Austin for the annual march. Then 30 to 40 more exonerees will converge on Austin for their semi-annual conference and will lead this year's march.

For more information, see [www.MarchforAbolition.org](http://www.MarchforAbolition.org).

## Solidarity with children of Gaza

# Museum censors artwork of war, occupation

By Megan Spencer

The Museum of Children's Art in Oakland, Calif., cancelled an exhibit of artwork created by Palestinian children living in the occupied Gaza Strip. The exhibit, entitled "A Child's View from Gaza," features artwork made during Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli assault on Gaza from December 2008 until January 2009. Amnesty International reports that the assault left 1,400 Palestinians dead, including more than 300 children. Thousands more were injured and traumatized.

Just two weeks before the exhibit's Sept. 24 opening, the museum's board of directors abruptly notified the Berkeley Middle East Children's Alliance, the group organizing the exhibit, that the board was cancelling the event due to the "graphic" and "violent" nature of the artwork, which they suggested was "inappropriate" for children to view.

Graphic violence is a reality for Palestinian children, who live with the horrors of occupation every day. Children residing in Gaza and the West Bank face



malnutrition, displacement from their homes and villages, inadequate access to health care and education — due to the economic blockade and military checkpoints — and the trauma of seeing countless friends and family members killed by occupation forces.

Ziad Abbas, MECA's associate director, told the Electronic Intifada that local mental health initiatives and art-based organizations in Gaza started working with traumatized children after Operation Cast Lead, in an effort to help them cope with fear and trauma. Palestinian children have long used art to convey

Artwork from 'A Child's View of Gaza' will be exhibited in Oakland, Calif.



their feelings about the reality of living under military siege. Once again pro-Israeli organizations have silenced them, as they try to squash any criticism of Israel and its brutal occupation.

While some parents may have legitimate concerns about their children viewing artwork illustrating violence and death, the museum's previous exhibits indicate that the decision to cancel the event was not simply a matter of protecting youth from graphic material. MOCHA has exhibited the artwork of Iraqi children who endured

the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of their homeland as well as artwork made by children during World War II.

Barbara Lubin, the executive director of MECA, said: "Anybody who knows this issue knows that the Jewish Federations of North America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs have launched a multimillion-dollar project to combat what they call the 'delegitimization' of Israel. ... They try to suffocate the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement and censor Palestinian cultural initiatives. What they're doing is financing the work of silencing and shutting down anyone who wants to talk about what's really happening to Palestinians."

Just like all children, Palestinian children must have their voices and experiences affirmed. By censoring the artwork of Gazan children, MOCHA missed an important opportunity to raise consciousness among children in the United States. Given that the U.S. spends more than \$7 billion a year supporting the Israeli mili-

*Continued on page 11*



# 10th anniversary of Durban conference

# Meeting against racism set for U.N.

By Dolores Cox

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the 2001 U.N. Durban (South Africa) World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. To commemorate the event there will be a high-level United Nations General Assembly meeting on racism in New York City on Sept. 22.

In 2001 the “Durban Declaration — Programme of Action” was adopted, declaring among other things that “slavery and the slave trade are crimes against humanity and should have always been so, especially the trans-Atlantic slave trade.” And, regarding the Palestinian struggle, Zionism was equated to racism.

Racial disparities were identified as evidence of discrimination against people of color, especially African Americans, with regard to housing, health, education, jobs and every area of life. The root causes and preventive measures that governments can take were also looked at. And global commitments to address the issues were made.

It was established that every five years a review of how far countries have come with regard to racism and discrimination would take place. However, this Durban II review conference was not held until 2009, eight years later. The venue for the conference was also changed from Durban to Geneva, Switzerland. As a result,

many nongovernmental organizations, especially those based in developing countries, were unable to attend. In addition, funding for them was reduced.

The Durban II conference was held for the purpose of reviewing the Programme of Action, which called for strong anti-racism legislation, improved education on racism, and better remedies and resources for victims of racism. Assessment of the progress achieved by countries in combating racism was made. And what remained to be done to obtain justice, compensation and reconciliation was looked at.

Also raised was that governments should be obligated to address this racism. And the need to put pressure on government officials was stressed. NGOs and social justice advocates offered solutions. Global commitments to address issues were given and the 2001 Programme of Action was reaffirmed.

The theme of this year's Sept. 22 meeting is “Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development.” The meeting has been reduced to a one-day plenary session, instead of the usual conference.

On this same day, however, U.N. Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon has unilaterally scheduled a nuclear security summit. Additionally, Israel is spearheading a campaign against the Durban Declaration.

Consequently, some countries will be boycotting the U.N. Meeting on Racism, including Germany, Canada, Italy, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, along with Israel and the U.S. The rest of the 193 member states are expected to actively participate. Ban Ki-moon has not spoken out against Israel's campaign against the Declaration. This has resulted in a growing political controversy. A coalition of NGOs, referred to as the Durban+10 Coalition, is protesting the secretariat's scheduling decision. Coalition members are the U.S. Human Rights Network, the National Lawyers Guild, the World Against Racism Network, the National Black United Front, the December 12th Movement, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the U.S. Palestinian Community Network, the Frantz Fanon Foundation and the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network.

A statement released at the U.N. by the Durban+10 Coalition on Aug. 12 says it “unequivocally supports and embraces the advances embodied in the Durban Declaration Programme of Action and is dedicated to ensuring that the DDPA remains the cornerstone of the U.N.'s program to combat racism.

“We see the DDPA as central to pressuring the governments of the world to adopt and thoroughly implement national plans of action to eradicate racial

discrimination, inequity, colonialism, xenophobia and related intolerances,” the statement continued.

The Coalition also accuses these countries of trying to “suppress the rights and demands of the many groups protected by the DDPA, including migrants, Indigenous peoples, African and African-descendant peoples for restitution and reparations, and those of the Palestinian people for self-determination.”

Once again, the U.S. is boycotting a World Conference Against Racism. How ironic that the U.S. is the host country, yet its Black president is supporting the boycott of the conference on racism. It did so at the 2009 Review Conference in Geneva and walked out of the 2001 conference in Durban. Considering that the U.S. was founded and thrived on the free labor of enslaved Africans and the genocide of Indigenous peoples, and including its dismal track record in combating racism, it is at least consistent, if nothing else.

A rally will take place Sept. 20 at the U.N. in support of the DDPA. Roger Wareham, a member of the International Secretariat of the December 12th Movement and the International Association Against Torture, stated in a Sept. 14 press release, as a motivation for the rally, “We will continue to organize people of African descent to struggle for our historically justifiable demand for reparations.” □

# U.S. uses Cuban 5 as hostage to anti-Cuba policy

By Cheryl LaBash

On Sept. 16, Judge Joan Lenard refused to allow René González, one of the five Cuban heroes unjustly held in U.S. prisons, to return to Cuba and his family when he is released on Oct. 7.

Only the day before, the former New Mexico governor, Bill Richardson, complained that Cuba did not allow him to visit convicted U.S. agent Alan Gross serving a 15-year sentence for distributing satellite phones. Gross worked for a U.S. government-funded program intended to undermine Cuban sovereignty and independence.

According to the New York Times, Richardson on his unofficial “humanitarian” visit carried with him a purported offer from the U.S. State Dept. which including repatriating González when he is released. A second part was to promote “a process for removing Cuba from the list of states sponsoring terrorism.”

These offers could only be viewed as a slap in the face of the Cuban people and government. In addition, they were a test of whether the current changes proposed at the Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party meant Cuba's commitment to self-determination and socialism had weakened. They haven't.

On Sept. 13, President Barack Obama extended the merciless blockade of Cuba for another year. In the United Nations, meanwhile, on Oct. 25 for the 20th consecutive time the General Assembly is expected to vote to condemn this unilateral act of war by the U.S. against its small but determined island neighbor.

In 2010, 187 countries voted to remove the blockade. Only the U.S. and Israel supported the blockade, with the Marshall Islands, Palau and Micronesia abstaining.

The Cuban Five — González, with Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González — had, during the 1990s, monitored the



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Fernando González Llort and Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez

activities of extremist groups in Miami that were carrying out terrorist attacks against Cuba's civilian population from their safe havens in southern Florida. For daring to defend Cuba against terrorism, the Five are serving harsh prison terms — including Gerardo Hernández's double-life plus 15 years sentence.

Earlier in the case, a three-judge appeals panel called the Miami venue of the trial “a perfect storm of prejudice” against the Five. Requiring René González to serve three years of parole in Miami puts him in harm's way near the paramilitaries he came to the U.S. to monitor.

It also extends another injustice. Olga Salanueva, González's spouse, is banned from entering the U.S. to visit him. Gerardo Hernández's spouse, Adriana Pérez, has not been granted a U.S. visa to visit him at the prison in Victorville, Calif.

The actions of Judge Lenard and Bill Richardson virtually admit that the Cuban Five are held hostage by the U.S. government for use as yet another battering ram against Cuba's right to determine its own path and destiny. It is the responsibility of U.S. residents to make the pressure to free the Cuban Five and end the blockade of Cuba irresistible. □

# People battle deadly repression in Bahrain

By Gene Clancy

Auat al-Qurmezi, age 20, knows all too well what it's like to live under a repressive monarchy backed by the United States. Because she publicly read a poem critical of the monarchy in Bahrain, she was arrested, held in custody for six months without trial, tortured and threatened with sexual assault.

“She was beaten with a hose and electrocuted,” al-Qurmezi's brother, Yusuf, said. “They put the clips on her lips and on other parts of her face. They did not rape her, but they told her they would. They put her in a narrow cell. Through the wall she could hear the screams of men who were being beaten. They would

come and tell her, ‘you are next.’ ” (Daily Telegraph, Sept. 18)

Hassan's last name is being withheld for his safety. The 25-year-old described his arrest in June after demonstrating against the regime.

“Show me your beautiful face,” Hassan quoted a police officer as telling him before punching it three times. He said others joined in, beating him “as if eating cake.” He keeps a picture of one of those officers on his cellphone, as a reminder. (New York Times, Sept. 17)

## U.S. backs absolute monarchy

The cities of Bahrain have become weekly if not daily battlegrounds as the people of Bahrain fight back against the

vicious crackdown of the absolute monarchy of Hamad bin Isa al-Kalifa who declared martial law in March. He was backed by the armed intervention of Saudi Arabia, which sent thousands of tank-borne troops.

In addition, al-Kalifa has the backing of the United States, which bases its Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. The events in Bahrain have exposed the U.S. lie that it is intervening in Libya and Syria because of a “concern for human rights.”

The toll of repression has been grim in a country of about 525,000 people. Human rights groups say 34 people have been killed, more than 1,400 people arrested, and as many as 3,600 people fired from their jobs. Four people died in custody af-

ter torture in what Human Rights Watch called “a systematic and comprehensive crackdown to punish and intimidate government critics and to end dissent root and branch.” (New York Times, Sept. 17)

A proportional toll in a country the size of the United States would be more than 11,000 killed, 840,000 arrested and more than 2 million people losing their jobs.

In addition, the monarchy has resorted to apartheid-like measures to divide the population along sectarian lines. Although 70 percent of the population is Shiite, the entire governmental apparatus, including the military and police forces, are firmly in the hands of the Sunni monarchy. Thousands of police have been recruited

Continued on page 10



# Prisons, repression & profits

The heroic struggle to save the life of death-row prisoner Troy Davis from a legal lynching in Georgia is not an isolated one. There are broader issues involved, like abolishing the death penalty, not just in the Davis case but in general. According to the Death Penalty Information Center website, as of Jan. 1 of this year, there are more than 3,250 death-row prisoners.

No millionaire or billionaire sits on death row. Death-row inmates are disproportionately Black and Latino, and the overwhelming majority are poor. These reasons alone are motivations to up the ante to abolish the death penalty. This penalty only serves to strength this terrorist arm of the repressive state apparatus under capitalism. To be proven innocent — as in the case of Davis, Mumia Abu-Jamal or Gary Graham aka Shaka Sankofa, who the state of Texas executed in 2000 — is never a guarantee of winning one's freedom in the biased U.S. courts.

Overall, there are an estimated 2.3 million people incarcerated in U.S. jails and prisons — the largest such population in the world. An additional 5 million people are either on probation or parole. All totaled, there are more than 7 million people under the jurisdiction of the U.S. prison system. This number does not include tens of thousands of youth in juvenile detention. More young African-American men are in prison than in college.

Repression of the most brutal kind is one aspect of the U.S. prison system. Fighting repression is part and parcel of a much larger struggle against the entire prison-industrial complex. The PIC is tied to restructuring the capitalist system, which has accelerated since the mid-1980s. This has resulted in a booming prisons-for-profit industry that has generated super-profits for Wall Street corporations like the Correctional Corporations of America.

In describing its purpose, CCA states that it “designs, builds, manages and operates correctional facilities and detention centers on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Marshals Service, nearly half of all states

and nearly a dozen counties across the country.” It goes on to say that it “owns and operates more than 60 facilities including 44 company-owned facilities, with a design capacity of more than 85,000 beds in 19 states and the District of Columbia.” (www.cca.com.)

CCA, which is based in Nashville, Tenn., is a multimillion-dollar corporation that has close ties to the U.S. government. Between 2003 and 2010, the CCA spent almost \$15 million lobbying members in both Houses of Congress, ICE, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Prisons and others in order to secure public monies for governmental contracts to expand its facilities around the U.S.

Commentator Bill Maher stated, “Prisons used to be a non-profit business. ... The CCA and similar corporations actually lobby Congress for stiffer sentencing laws so they can lock more people up and make more money. That's why [the U.S.] has the world's largest prison population — because actually rehabilitating people would have a negative impact on the bottom line.” (Huffington Post, July 27, 2009)

The PIC has nothing to do with rehabilitation. The PIC is based on making profits at the expense of human needs under the most horrific conditions. It has this in common with most capitalist institutions.

Corporations like Victoria's Secret, Best Western and Boeing outsource jobs to prisons so they can use prison labor to undercut unions. Corporations can increase profits by paying prisoners much less than the minimum wage.

Telephone companies get huge profits by charging exorbitant prices to prisoners forced to make collect calls to their families.

As the poverty rate soars and unemployment grows, so will the incarceration rate. Demanding the dismantlement of the PIC should be tied to the need for a massive jobs program along with eliminating the entire capitalist system. This struggle should be waged in the revolutionary spirit of martyred prisoners like the Attica brothers, Shaka Sankofa and Troy Davis, who is scheduled to be murdered Sept. 21.

Will anger over the loss of a future break out in rebellion?  
Wall Street, Sept. 17.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

## Billionaire Bloomberg is right

# Unemployment, poverty sow seeds of rebellion

By Larry Hales  
New York

During an interview with WOR radio on Sept. 16, New York City's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, stated that the conditions of high employment in the U.S. could lead to social unrest on a par with what has occurred throughout parts of North Africa, the Middle East, Britain, Spain, Greece and elsewhere. His specific comment was, “You have a lot of kids graduating college can't find jobs. That's what happened in Cairo. That's what happened in Madrid. You don't want those kinds of riots here.”

The uprising in Egypt had more of a political character, the primary demand being against the corrupt and brutal Mubarak regime which had been in power for 30 years. But this was against a backdrop of an economic crisis that has led to large-scale unemployment around the world and rising cost of staples, fuel and other necessities. London was in response to state repression, again set against the scrim of the current economic crisis.

The crises in Spain and Greece are more general, although in those countries and in much of industrialized Europe, there are rising populations of immigrants who face disproportionate rates of unemployment and poverty, along with repression.

Bloomberg went on to talk about the effect the job crisis will have on future generations. He hits on, whether knowing it or not, the shrinking number of jobs available and the objective proclivity of the means of production to be constantly revolutionized, which means fewer workers being more productive. This in turn speeds up the chief crisis of capitalism: overproduction. Rates of profit fall, markets become glutted, crisis happens. The current and future generations grow up in a world more fraught with uncertainty, more dangerous, seemingly more cold.

As Karl Marx wrote in the Communist Manifesto: “All that is solid melts into air, all which is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real condition of life and his relations with his kind.”

That the primary problems of this society are systemic becomes more clear every day. The fundamental contradiction of society, that between the exploiting and exploited classes, is also more apparent, especially as the banks continue cannibalizing the public treasuries and require government at every level to become more austere.

Bloomberg's remarks started with the situation of recent college graduates,



which is far less precarious than that of the general population. College graduates have an official unemployment rate of 4.3 percent, compared to 14.3 percent for people with only a high school diploma. For high school dropouts, it was 42.7 percent in April of this year.

The official unemployment figure for the general population is 9.1 percent, which means 14 million people. This figure, as large as it is, excludes discouraged workers who have stopped looking for jobs, as well as people who work only part-time while desiring a full-time job. Also not counted are more than 2 million prisoners. If workers from all these categories are added, the number is around 30 million.

### Poverty rise hits oppressed communities hardest

As with all other indicators of economic and social well-being, the conditions of unemployment, especially chronic unemployment, increase with oppressed nationalities, specifically Black, Latino/a and Indigenous peoples. National oppression is a permanent feature of U.S. capitalism, so the disparate impact of suffering remains and increases greatly amongst oppressed people in times of crisis.

It is in the oppressed communities where the contradictions are most stark. While the mainstream media talk of a second or double-dip recession, depression-like conditions have long existed in oppressed communities.

Since 2008, official unemployment rates among all the oppressed have remained above 10 percent. At the present time, the rate for Black workers in general is 16.7 percent; for Black males it is 18 percent; and it is almost 47 percent for Black youth between 16 and 19 years of age.

Increasing poverty rates in the U.S., which are tied to unemployment, are an even greater indication of the declining conditions and raise the specter of social unrest or, more properly put, rebellions.

A total of 46.2 million people in the U.S. now live in official poverty — 2.6 million more than just two years ago. Breaking it down, one in five children lives in poverty. The overall poverty rate is 15.1 percent, the worst since 1993. Breaking it down, 27.4 percent of Black people live in poverty, 26.6 percent of Latino/as and 18 percent of all women.

And this is despite the fact that the poverty threshold for the U.S. is tragically low — at \$22,314 a year for a family of four and \$11,319 for an individual.

To put it into perspective, the U.S. Department of Agriculture broke food shop-

*Continued on page 11*

# People battle repression in Bahrain

*Continued from page 9*

from Pakistan in order to bolster the monarchy's influence. The government crackdown has only exacerbated long-standing policies of discrimination and lack of economic opportunity for the Shiite majority.

Activists trade stories of colleagues forced to eat feces in prison and even of high-ranking Shiite bureaucrats compelled to crawl in their offices like infants. Human rights groups say 43 Shiite mosques and religious structures were destroyed or damaged by a government that contended that it faced an Iranian-inspired plot, without offering any evidence that Tehran played a role.

“They told me, “There are two ways we can deal with you ... as a human or as an animal,” Matar Matar, 45, recalled being told after he was arrested by men in civilian clothes in May and jailed for three

months. {New York Times, Sept. 15}

It mattered little, Mr. Matar said, that he was a popular former lawmaker or a father of two. Beaten twice, he spent half the time in solitary confinement in a windowless room. He often heard screams of others.

The comments by Sheik Isa Qassim came as mourners were gathering for the funeral of a 35-year-old Sayyed Jawad Ahmed, who relatives say died after inhaling tear gas fired at protesters on Sept. 12. (AP, Sept. 16)

The masses of Bahrain are becoming increasingly radicalized as they resist what can only be described as fascist oppression. “You know how it is,” said Hassan. “When you cut off hope, you leave no alternative. ... There's no other choice but violence; we can't back down.” (New York Times, Sept. 17) □



The battle for Libya rages on while imperialists rush to legitimize NTC ‘rebels’

# Persecution of Black Libyans draws international outcry

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Despite the Sept. 15 visit to Libya of British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the struggle for control of the oil-producing North African state of Libya is far from complete. Battles for control of Bani Walid and Sirte illustrate that supporters of Muammar Gadhafi’s government still represent a disciplined fighting force against the U.S./NATO fighter jets and military operatives backing the National Transitional Council “rebels.”

British and French leaders visited to publicly support the NTC rebels who have so far failed to pull together a provisional government. They also represented two of the European countries — former colonizers of Africa — claiming responsibility for the death and destruction they have wrought in Libya since February.

As the U.N. 66th General Assembly’s opening approached, the Obama administration hailed the NTC rebels as Libya’s legitimate government, despite the council’s undemocratic and disorganized character.

Nonetheless, resistance to the expansion of NTC rule in the western regions of the country has recently been quite effective. Loyalist fighters in Bani Walid and Sirte have repelled several attempts by the Western-backed rebels to enter and remain inside the cities that are Gadhafi government strongholds.

Gadhafi remains at-large. His spokesperson, Moussa Ibrahim, says that the leader is still inside the country and is directing resistance to the NATO-backed rebels. Meanwhile, NATO’s bombing in civilian areas in Bani Walid is aimed at

clearing out the population so that the NTC forces can enter and proclaim victory.

In Sirte, Gadhafi’s home area, fierce fighting has occurred, as the rebels have attempted to enter the coastal city. Loyalist units have struck the rebels with sniper fire and mortars, killing many of them and forcing them to flee.

“The fighters [NTC rebels] push into the city in the morning,” observed Associated Press reporter Hadeel al-Shalchi, “but withdraw at night, forcing them to battle their way in each day. When they decide to enter the town, they charge in half a dozen pickup trucks, only to retreat a short while later.” (Sept. 19)

The article continued, “On [Sept. 19], three of their cars rode right into an ambush by Gaddafi forces on a street none of the outsiders was familiar with. One of their fellow fighters, Wassim Rajab, said he heard that four of them were killed.” Also exemplifying the loyalist forces’ intense resistance, Lutfi al-Shibly said, “We [rebels] entered the city, 600 meters from the city center, but we didn’t have enough forces, so we lost the position and had to retreat.”

**Mercenaries reported captured**

Significantly, Ibrahim announced that loyalist forces near Bani Walid had captured 17 mercenaries from France, Britain and Qatar. Since the war on Libya began on Feb. 17, confirmed reports have told of intelligence operatives and Special Forces from these three countries and the U.S. and Egypt coordinating and bolstering the NTC rebels’ military actions.

British and French foreign offices immediately denied Ibrahim’s allegations. However, the Libyan government spokesperson said resistance to the as-

saults on Bani Walid and Sirte resulted in the capture and killing of hundreds of NATO-backed personnel. Ibrahim told Syria-based Al-Rai Television, “Sirte is the symbol of resistance in Libya.”

Because of intensifying resistance to the NATO-led forces, the NTC rebels have become confused in the areas under assault. AP says the so-called “trained military of the NTC pulled away from Bani Walid to regroup and reinforce for a new assault after they were heavily beaten in the city [Sept. 16]. That has left bands of ragtag, undisciplined fighters on the front line.” (Sept. 19)

According to AP, the remaining personnel from the NATO-led forces “include fighters as young as 18 who spend hours smoking hash, shooting at plastic bottles, arguing with one another and sometimes just firing wildly into the streets out of apparent boredom.”

Meanwhile a Turkish C-130 cargo plane was fired upon while purportedly dropping humanitarian aid over Bani Walid on Sept. 17. Turkey, a longtime NATO member, had initially expressed reservations about this war, but later joined the fray and has recognized the NTC as Libya’s government.

**Anti-African terror can no longer be concealed**

Black Libyans and Africans from other countries on the continent are being falsely labeled as “mercenaries” by the NATO-led forces and are being persecuted. Thousands of guest workers and expatriates from other African states that have good relations with Libya have been dislocated, harassed, imprisoned, beaten, tortured and even lynched.

The blatant racism fostered by the imperialist states that are financing this war has prevented the African Union from recognizing the rebel NTC. The A.U. has taken this position despite tremendous pressure from the U.S. and other NATO countries.

The Digital Journal pointed out, “Black Libyans and African migrants have been targeted by Libyan rebel fighters who even have a special unit for this purpose. The ‘Brigade for Purging Slaves, black skin’ has torched homes of residents of Tawergha, whilst black African migrants are rounded up in Tripoli and thrown into prison, suspected of being mercenaries in the employ of Gaddafi.” (Sept. 19)

The corporate media has rarely raised this issue since it contradicts the image promoted by the imperialists that the rebels are fighting a dictatorial regime, imbued with ideals of “democracy and freedom.” Even the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times have had to report on this phenomenon that has permeated the counterrevolution in Libya.

U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. has called for an investigation of the matter by the International Criminal Court, which has played a largely reactionary role in Africa. It indicted Sudan’s president and recently issued arrest warrants for Gadhafi and other Libyan leaders. Jackson says that he will “raise this issue with my colleagues and condition any financial support for the reconstruction of Libya and its transition to a democratic society.” (Digital Journal, Sept. 19)

The White House and NATO, which have repeatedly stated that their involve-

ment in Libya is designed to protect civilians, have failed to acknowledge the persecution of Africans there.

On Sept. 18 the British Broadcasting Corporation cited the plight of a Nigerian family in hiding since the occupation of Tripoli began. Their 16-year-old daughter said, “A group of armed men [NTC rebels] came to our house. They started knocking; they came in saying ‘murtazaka’ (mercenaries). They locked my mother inside a toilet. Six of them raped me. They took our belongings and money. My father tried to stop them, but they hit him and carried him away.” (Sept. 18)

The young woman has not seen or heard from her father since this incident occurred three weeks ago. Stories abound of home invasions, beatings and robberies by the NTC rebels.

The BBC quoted one man anonymously who said, “This is the African continent, I am an African, this is my land. Is it because of my color, because I am a black man? We don’t have a voice. Who would you turn to?”

RT satellite television recently documented the “police-state” conditions that have prevailed in Tripoli since the NTC rebels entered. Many civilians said they still supported the Gadhafi government but could not speak out for fear of retribution.

**Libyan occupation doomed to failure**

Even though the imperialist states and their allies have given the NTC rebels full diplomatic, economic and military support, the NTC has not been able to form a provisional government, and factions have expressed hostility and suspicion toward each other.

Anti-war and social justice organizations inside the U.S. and other NATO countries must demand that all foreign military forces be withdrawn from Libyan territory and its waterways. They must protest the racist persecution of Black Libyans and all Africans and demand that it stop immediately.

The developments in Libya illustrate that there is no such thing as a “good” imperialist war of aggression and occupation. The aim of imperialism is to subjugate the masses in Libya in order to steal their resources and labor.

## Solidarity with children of Gaza

*Continued from page 8*

tary, children here should see the artwork of children in Gaza that reveals the horrors they are forced to endure.

Children here should be raised with an awareness about the suffering that occurs in the world, particularly because of the U.S. government’s pro-war policies. If children in the U.S. saw this artwork, perhaps they would help to cultivate a more compassionate and conscious culture, rather than one which glorifies racism and war.

To ensure that the Palestinian children artists will not be silenced, MECA has arranged for the exhibit to be presented in the courtyard outside of MOCHA on the scheduled opening date, Sept. 24.

*The writer is a youth activist and artist in Detroit.*

*Continued from page 10*

pers into four categories: thrifty, low-cost, moderate and liberal. A family of four was considered thrifty if it spent no more than \$464 a month. This was in 2009. That comes to \$5,568 per year — exactly 25 percent of the income limit that defines a family of four as living in poverty. Food prices in the third quarter of 2011 have remained high, according to agri-pulse.com.

The median gross rent in the U.S. back in 2008 was \$824 per month, or \$9,888 per year, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. If a family of four paid the average rent and were thrifty shoppers, \$15,456 of their income would go to food and housing alone. That leaves \$6,858 for everything else: health care, transportation, clothing, etc.

The average fare for public transportation for a one-way adult ticket is \$1.50, according to the American Public Transportation Association 2011 Transportation Fact Book.

In 2009 the average yearly cost of health care for a family of four was \$16,771. That means a family of four just meeting the poverty threshold would not be able to afford it.

Ron Haskings at the Brookings Institute stated regarding poverty: “Safety net programs run by the federal and state governments are helping millions of families avoid poverty, but the programs could be subject to cuts at the federal and state level because of continuing deficit and debt problems.”

Last year, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program was cut by more than \$10 billion, starting in 2014. Cuts to

SNAP are being discussed again. Already the House of Representatives has voted to change food stamp benefits to a block grant, which would be a lump sum that could run out.

Bloomberg’s assertion that eventually there will be a subjective response to the objective worsening reality is correct. History shows that. Even the rebellions of the 1960s, while addressing the political repression that was rampant, were also an answer to the impoverished conditions in Black, Latino/a and Indigenous communities, along with anger against the draft and the war in Vietnam.

The repression has not gone away. From the murders of Ayanna Jones, Oscar Grant, Sean Bell, Alonzo Ashley, Bresnia Flores and James Craig Anderson to the occupation of oppressed communities, and the raids and deportations, racist repression exists, both legal and extra-legal.

Recently, a number of cities, including Philadelphia’s Center City and Cleveland, have implemented selective curfews because of flash uprisings of young, primarily Black men. Other cities are threatening to follow suit. Some 50 young Black people were rounded up the first night of the Center City curfew.

The responses of a few oppressed youth will only increase. But the crisis is systemic and intractable, so suffering will increase and will continue to disproportionately affect the most oppressed. The state will become more repressive. The seeds of revolt are planted and the prospects for rebellion grow by the day. □



## A medida que aumenta la pobreza y el desempleo ‘el plan de empleos’ de Obama no ofrece nada nuevo

Por **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

El presidente Barack Obama, enfrentando enormes desafíos a su reelección en el 2012, así como la posible erosión adicional de la base del Partido Demócrata en el Senado y la Cámara de Representantes, dio a conocer la Ley Americana de Empleos durante una intervención especial ante una sesión conjunta del Congreso el 8 de septiembre. El 12 de septiembre anunció la presentación de una propuesta de \$447 mil millones al Congreso que supuestamente está destinada para crear empleos en medio de la peor crisis económica desde la Gran Depresión de la década de 1930.

Sin embargo, ¿podrá realmente crear empleos este plan que no tiene ningún tipo de calendario o metas específicas?

¿Podrá el sistema capitalista estadounidense generar empleos a largo plazo sin una reestructuración fundamental de las prioridades de la economía política que se orientan hacia el mantenimiento del status quo y la maximización de las ganancias para quienes controlan los medios de producción?

Teniendo los/as africano-americanos/as y los/as latinos/as tasas de desempleo mayores a la de la población blanca, ¿abordará este plan seriamente el racismo y la opresión nacional inherente que se encuentran en el centro del dispar impacto de la política económica capitalista en el período actual? ¿O se trata simplemente de otra táctica de la campaña electoral para inspirar y movilizar potencialmente la base de los/as votantes del Partido Demócrata en noviembre de 2012?

Con el fin de responder a estas preguntas es esencial que los/as trabajadores/as y la población oprimida dentro de los Estados Unidos se organicen de manera independiente a fin de elevar las demandas económicas y sociales que hablan directamente a sus necesidades. En la actualidad, la crisis de desempleo debe considerarse en el contexto más amplio del carácter de la actual fase de la globalización capitalista.

**El desempleo es mayor entre los/as afroamericanos/as**

El plantear la cuestión de puestos de

trabajo debe comenzar desde el marco de poder garantizar el empleo pleno y la eliminación de la pobreza. Ninguno de estos temas fue abordado por Obama en su discurso ante el Congreso o en su discurso del Día del Trabajo en Detroit el 5 de septiembre.

La tasa general de desempleo en los EE.UU. ahora se encuentra oficialmente en el 9,1 por ciento. Esto significa que aproximadamente de 15 a 16 millones de personas están buscando empleo y no pueden encontrarlo.

Sin embargo, una vez que se toma en cuenta el número de trabajadores/as descorazonados/as por no encontrar empleo y los/as empleados/as a tiempo parcial, el número de personas que necesitan trabajo es de más de 30 millones. Al mismo tiempo en la comunidad latina la tasa de desempleo oficial es del 11,3 por ciento.

Superando todos los grupos nacionales está el afroamericano, cuya tasa de desempleo está oficialmente en el 16,7 %, más del 15,9% por ciento en julio.

Para los hombres afroamericanos la tasa de desempleo creció un punto porcentual en agosto, llegando al 18 por ciento. Para los/as jóvenes afroamericanos/as entre las edades de 16 y 19, la tasa de desempleo oficialmente se calculó en 46,5%, subiendo abruptamente del 39,2% en sólo un mes.

Aunque al parecer 155.000 afroamericanos/as fueron contratados/as en agosto, esto fue contrarrestado por el creciente número de personas que buscaban empleo donde ninguno estaba disponible.

El jefe del Caucus negro del Congreso, Emanuel Cleaver de Missouri, dijo que el Caucus iba a “ofrecer sugerencias al Presidente Obama antes de su discurso a la nación sobre el empleo”. Desde el comienzo del 112vo Congreso, el grupo legislativo afroamericano ya ha presentado 40 propuestas de puestos de trabajo, ninguna de las cuales fue considerada por la administración o por el pleno de la cámara de representantes.

La miembro del Caucus, Maxine Waters de California, quien ha criticado a la administración por no abordar el impacto específico de la crisis económica sobre los/as afroamericanos/as — aunque ella consta en récord por apoyar la Ley Americana de Empleos — señaló que no se hizo ninguna mención específica sobre

los efectos dispares en esta comunidad que ha sufrido mucho más bajo la era del capitalismo de bajos salarios.

**Desigualdad estructural y pobreza creciente**

La pobreza ha ido aumentando en los Estados Unidos a un ritmo alarmante, especialmente en las comunidades afroamericanas. Un informe reciente del Centro Conjunto para Estudios Políticos y Económicos documenta este hecho con datos del censo de Estados Unidos de 2010.

Titulada “The Lost Decade” (La década perdida) refiriéndose a los años 2000, dice el informe que la “Pobreza concentrada ha aumentado considerablemente desde el año 2000. Aproximadamente uno de cada 11 residentes de áreas metropolitanas estadounidenses o 22,3 millones de personas, ahora viven en un barrio donde el 30 por ciento o más vive en la pobreza”.

Además, el informe señala que “el número de personas en barrios de alta pobreza aumentó en casi 5 millones desde el año 2000, cuando 18,4 millones de residentes en áreas metropolitanas (7,9 por ciento del total) vivían en barrios de alta pobreza. Entre 2000 y 2009, el número de personas en la pobreza creció en 10 millones, de 33 a 43 millones, elevando la tasa de pobreza del 11,3 por ciento al 14,3 por ciento”.

Refiriéndose específicamente a los/as oprimidos/as por su nacionalidad en los EE.UU., informa el estudio que los/as “afroamericanos, hispanos y americanos indígenas son sustancialmente más propensos a vivir en barrios de alta pobreza que los blancos no hispanos. Uno de cada cuatro afroamericanos (7,6 millones de personas), uno en seis hispanos (7,1 millones de personas) y uno de cada ocho americanos indígenas (150.000 personas) en América metropolitana vive en una sección censal en la que un 30 por ciento o más de la población está en la pobreza”.

Según el reporte, es importante destacar que: “Uno de cada nueve residentes nacidos en el exterior también vive en vecindarios de alta pobreza. Estas proporciones contrastan marcadamente con el estimado de uno en 25 blancos no hispanos (6,3 millones) que vive en una de estas secciones. Al igual que las tenden-

cias generales, estas altas cifras representan un retroceso substancial para los afroamericanos y latinos comparado con el progreso en los años 90 de los blancos no hispanos, la mayoría de ellos nacidos en el país [EE.UU.]”.

**La cuestión nacional no puede ser solucionada bajo el capitalismo.**

Estas atroces cifras, provistas por el mismo gobierno estadounidense, muestran que la tendencia actual dentro del sistema capitalista resultará inevitablemente en el aumento del empobrecimiento del pueblo trabajador, especialmente el de las naciones oprimidas. La Ley Americana de Empleos no está diseñada para tratar estas disparidades, y quizás solamente servirá como una consigna de campaña para el Partido Demócrata.

Además, ha habido dos intentos en el Congreso por decretar empleo pleno en los Estados Unidos. La Ley de Pleno Empleo ya estaba debilitada para cuando llegó a promulgarse en Ley de Empleo de 1946. Sin embargo, cuando el desempleo empezó a subir en los años 70, algunas de las provisiones que habían sido quitadas de la ley fueron restauradas en la Ley Humphrey-Hawkins de Empleo Pleno y Crecimiento Balanceado de 1978.

El hecho de que no haya discusión por parte de la Administración o del Congreso sobre la implementación de la ley de 1978, la cual requiere que el gobierno federal cree empleos cuando la tasa de desempleo excede el 4 por ciento, es indicativo de que hay una falta de voluntad política por parte de los/as políticos/as de los dos partidos de la clase dominante así como de la burguesía, por eliminar el desempleo y menos aún la pobreza.

El plan de Obama de proveer más incentivos de impuestos para que las empresas empleen a más trabajadores/as es un fracaso ya probado. Siendo la política estatal desde la época de Reagan, ha sido acelerada desde el comienzo de la administración Bush en 2001.

El enorme crecimiento de los gastos militares desde la administración Bush ha ido paralelo a las tasas más altas de desempleo y pobreza. Lo mismo ocurre con los masivos rescates multimillonarios de las instituciones financieras y corporaciones transnacionales desde 2008.

Es solamente bajo un sistema socialista donde una economía planificada está instituida, que las cuestiones de opresión nacional, pobreza y empleo pleno pueden ser tratadas adecuadamente. Es la meta del sistema capitalista el acrecentar al máximo sus ganancias y debilitar más a la clase obrera, no el proveer empleos y prosperidad para la mayoría del pueblo.

Por consiguiente, los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as nacionalmente deben abandonar los partidos de la clase dominante en los Estados Unidos y avanzar su propio programa político con el objetivo de eliminar la opresión nacional, la pobreza y el desempleo. Esto sólo se puede hacer con un programa consciente de educación política masiva, organización y movilización para no solamente defender los logros del pasado sino para crear sociedades sin explotación del futuro. □

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